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The University of Southern Mississippi

“NO ON 26” and @MS4HealthyFams:
A Study of Excellence Theory Public Relations in the Magnolia State

by

Karelia Schmitz

A Thesis
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in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to better understand how public relations campaigns that are designed to influence public policy can incorporate principles from James E. Grunig's Excellence Theory to improve campaign effectiveness and relevance. In this case study of the Mississippians for Healthy Families campaign in opposition to Mississippi Proposition 26, social media distributed was viewed to analyze its content messages and practices. The study's research question was designed to understand communication methods used by Mississippians for Healthy Families through the "No on 26" campaign, and the question was examined through a content analysis of materials collected from MS4HealthyFamilies on Twitter, Mississippians For Healthy Families on Facebook, votenoon26.org, and plannedparenthood.org. The findings of this study contribute to the current understanding of public relations theory through review of specific tactics and practices of the organization, which can be applied to public relations campaigning for public policy change as a whole. Excellence theory principles found through the content analysis of this study suggest that practice of formative research, symmetrical communication and relationship building with key publics are important to campaign success.

Key Words: Public Relations, Excellence Theory, Mississippians for Healthy Families, formative research, symmetrical communication, relationship building

DEDICATION

My mother, Kris Schmitz:

Thank you for pep talks, prayers and your continued support through every step.

You told me I could do it even when I did not believe it myself.

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I would like to thank Dr. Cindy Blackwell for regularly asking me, “How’s the thesis coming?” Her words of encouragement helped me to remember the light at the end of the tunnel, and push on till completion.

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CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

From August until November of 2011, the residents of Mississippi were engaged in a debate of no or yes on amendment 26. Mississippians could not turn on the television, listen to the radio or check social networking without hearing of the proposed amendment to define personhood from the moment of conception. The Mississippi Secretary of State, Delbert Hosemann, provided voters with access to an official statement of the proposition's wording: "Initiative #26-Definition of "person": Should the term "person" be defined to include every human being from the moment of fertilization, cloning, or the equivalent thereof (Secretary of State.)?" Organizations on either side of the issue fledged active campaigns to sway voters' opinions in the election. Through use of public relations (PR) to engage Mississippians in the election, it became clear what a vital role these professionals and organizations could play in influencing election results.

This study will examine the public relations campaign enacted by Mississippians for Healthy Families in opposition to Proposition 26. Through a case study of this campaign during the Mississippi 2011 November election, this study will view the social media distributed to analyze its content messages and practices. The study's research question is designed to understand communication methods used by Mississippians for Healthy Families in influencing public policy through the "No on 26" campaign. The aim of the study is to understand specific tactics and practices of the organization that can be applied to public relations campaigning to influence public policy as a whole.

This study will sample the social media distributed by the public relations campaign. Content was pulled from sites including: MS4HealthyFamilies on Twitter,

Mississippians For Healthy Families on Facebook, votenoon26.org, and plannedparenthood.org. By using the media, organizational communication, the content was analyzed to gain a better understanding of the overall movement. Data was collected from social media publicized as part of the Mississippians for Healthy Families campaign as well as press releases by their movement partner organization the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA). Materials were printed to further review the content for emerging themes that align with the James E. Grunig theory of Excellence principles. Data was organized by source and divided based on the social networking site it was generated on separate from other media. A content analysis was conducted to review media on the state level that was distributed across Mississippi.

Mississippians for Healthy Families Partner Planned Parenthood's Past Tactics

During the “No On 26” campaign, close ties were established between Mississippians for Healthy Families and the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. With the outreach director for Mississippians for Healthy Families being Felicia Brown Williams, who also works as Southeast Regional Director of Public Policy for PPFA, it is helpful to view past PPFA tactics to understand the foundation with which Mississippians for Healthy Families practiced. Social media accounts for Mississippians for Healthy Families were created in August and September of 2011 and the group filed officially as an organization September 1, 2011. Due to the creation of this organization being specifically to “educate Mississippi voters about the dangers of ballot initiative 26, leading to defeat of the measure,” according to government income tax form 990 filed by treasurer Kay Scott, there are no past tactics original to the organization prior to the 2011

election. For this reason, it is pertinent to view the past tactics of their partner organization PPFA.

In a study to view crisis communication tactics, Rasmussen (2012) analyzed Planned Parenthood's methods in a conflict with the pro-life organization Live Action in 2011. A content analysis of the organization's social media efforts was conducted as they addressed the conflict, which began with a YouTube video. Rasmussen noted social media used by Planned Parenthood in its public relations methods to respond quickly to a large population of followers. The organization was able to utilize their website, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts already created to address the controversy (Rasmussen, 2012, pp.1-4).

Planned Parenthood maintains multiple accounts on these social media sites as well. In order to reach more specific audiences, many state-level offices maintain additional accounts on both Facebook and Twitter. The national organization manages three sub-categorical accounts for: 1. the entire association, 2. the "action fund" branch, and 3. the "teen branch." On Facebook and Twitter sites, one can access each of these sub-categorical accounts targeted to more specific population areas within the larger organization.

A strongpoint in the public relations of Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) is their president, Cecile Richards. Baumgardner (2006) said, "The selection of Richards was somewhat unusual in that she isn't a healthcare provider, nor did she work for a Planned Parenthood affiliate (as PPFA heads have almost always done)". Instead, her pedigree is purely political. What this signals is that many of the decision-makers at the gigantic organization, from members of the board to the heads of

influential affiliates, believe that the disconnection between reach and grip means that Planned Parenthood needs to lead a political movement-both at the grassroots (i.e., the people they serve) and in the smaller, crucial world of Beltway politics (Baumgardner, 24).” In this article, Baumgardner discusses Richards’ political strengths and networking as an example to say that the overall organization strives to influence policy to advance through politics.

In an interview of Cecile Richards by Ruth Conniff, this argument is made as well. Conniff discusses Richard’s involvement with the 2012 Presidential election as well as local issues to develop an understanding of her role in influencing political policy making (Conniff, 2012, p. 33).

CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Personhood

In order to understand the Mississippians for Healthy Families No On 26 public relations campaign, it is imperative to define “personhood” as it applies to the proposition. One of the names given to the proposition was the “personhood amendment.” Voters took part in deciding “yes” or “no” in either agreement or disagreement with the proposition’s definition of a person. An article for Ascension Health explained personhood as:

“A socially constructed moral category that denotes the inclusion criteria and salient characteristics that distinguish human beings from other forms of life, thus specifying the individuals to whom we owe particular moral obligations... Philosophically, personhood is generally defined by some list of essential properties by which we recognize a human being as a person. Though these lists vary, they often include such characteristics as consciousness, the ability to reason, self-movement, self-awareness and a capacity to communicate. The second way of defining personhood is more theologically oriented and entails some relational interpretation of what it means to be a person...(Personhood.)”

Chandler-Garcia (2012) examined how the U.S. Supreme Court has defined the term within Constitutional law. In this study, the term was defined uniquely for different contexts, in reference to fetuses. “In *Roe v. Wade*, the Court declared that the fetus was not a person in the whole sense, but it did recognize that the fetus can be treated as a person in some contexts after it reaches viability (Chandler-Garcia, 2012, p. 310)”. The controversy over this decision has resulted in continual discussion from both pro-choice and pro-life activists providing the substance of which the Mississippi Proposition 26 election exhibited. Chandler-Garcia also found through studying the works of John Locke and Immanuel Kant that psychological criteria can be used to define the characteristics of personhood:

Rational beings or entities who are capable of reason, reflection, and autonomy are generally considered to be persons. This is in contrast to a biological definition that relies on criteria such as human parentage or DNA evidence. Undoubtedly, the fetus is biologically and genetically a human being from the point of conception with a unique genotype. Further, the zygote or the fertilized egg is the first step in the biological process in which the zygote becomes a fetus, and then an infant, child, teenager, adult, and finally an elder. Just as certainly as the fetus is biologically human, the fetus is certainly alive. Thus, there should be no question that the fetus is a live, human being. However, as previous chapters illustrated, classifying an entity as a human being does not automatically guarantee personhood (Chandler-Garcia, 324).

Appell-Warren (2007) attempted to define “personhood” from its use in anthropological literature. This study addresses the use of the term in anthropology without a “coherent understanding” or definition. Appell-Warren provides a simplistic explanation that, “Personhood is the attainment of physiological, psychological and social competence as it is defined by a given culture. The attainment of different levels of personhood is marked throughout the life cycle by rituals, rites of passage and by other recognized markers” (Appell-Warren, 1988, p. 6).

Current Public Relations Tactics to Influence Policy

Current tactics used by public relations practitioners to influence policy change include much social media and political marketing according to Eyrich, N., Padman, M., and Sweetser, K. (2008), Rasmussen (2012), Briones, R., Kuch, B., Liu, B., and Jin, Y. (2011), Budak (2010), Edman (2010), Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas (2009), Waters and Jamal (2011), Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton’s (2012), Kent (2013), and Auger (2013.) These studies exhibit a general trend in public relations tactics towards integration of social media as a key campaign tactic.

Eyrich, N., Padman, M., and Sweetser, K. (2008) surveyed professionals working in public relations positions to gather information about their use of social media and

online communication technology. Through the study, they were able to provide evidence that social media is being rapidly adopted by public relations professionals to develop and advance the industry. Study participants were asked to rate his or her perception of industry-wide adoption of social media on a 5-point Likert scale with a range of 1= “never” and 5= “all the time.” Participants averaged a score of 3.05, meaning that public relations professionals surveyed felt social media will be widely adopted in the field in the future. Eyrich, N., Padman, M., and Sweetser, K. (2008) conducted this study during the early stages of social media development and stated in the study that, “As one of the first academic studies to provide data on overall social media adoption, this research in brief provides a quick snapshot of adoption trends in the industry. Overall, practitioners have adopted nearly six different social media tools professionally (Eyrich, N., Padman, M., and Sweetser, K., 2008)”. Much research has been conducted since this study, but it provides a point of reference for how influential social media has become in just the few short years between 2008 when this study was conducted, and 2011 when the Mississippi election took place for Proposition 26.

Rasmussen (2012) collected material from social media units including Facebook posts, Twitter tweets, YouTube videos and blog posts released to assess their part in Planned Parenthood’s crisis management. Through this study, Rasmussen concluded that “practitioners must identify, interpret, and respond to threats, and social media” due to their increased importance to public relations. Rasmussen also stated, “As social media and controlled online media become a more viable resource for practitioners, understanding the interplay with traditional media is important (Rasmussen, 2012, p. 90)”. This study reflects the importance of social media usage as a public relations tactic

to influence policy. Rasumssen (2012) identifies the need for practitioners to utilize social media as a tool to accomplish classic public relations goals of relationship building & credibility, using new outlets to achieve the same goals in a more socially relevant way.

Briones, R., Kuch, B., Liu, B., and Jin, Y. (2011) studied forty individuals from the American Red Cross to research how the organization is able to stay up to date with digital communication and the role of social media in relationship building. Research results found Twitter and Facebook to be the most popular social media sites used by the organization, and use of those outlets has proved to be more likely to receive feedback from followers than traditional outlets of communication. One interviewee said they believe social media is increasingly becoming a more important tool for public relations practitioners, “It’s actually better, we get more response from our postings on Facebook and Twitter than our more traditional – even from the chapter’s main website (Briones, et. al, 2011, p. 39)”. This research exemplifies the trend by public relations practitioners moving towards more social media usage as a campaign and program tactic to influence policy change for their organizations.

Budak (2010) viewed the 2008 presidential election to argue the effect of new media, such as Facebook and Twitter, and found although it is significant, “old media” is still dominant. Budak presents the argument that campaigns must not only rely on new social media to engage voters but use a combination of old and new. To significantly influence voters in policy determining elections, public relations practitioners should use a mix of social media as well as broadcast and print according to Budak’s research (Budak, 2010, p. 29-40).

Edman (2010) specifically targeted Twitter as an important tool for public relations practitioners in influencing policy change, because it can be utilized to reach out to publics in building mutually beneficial relationships for public relations (Edman, 2010, p. 8). Through analyzing 47 corporations during a sampling period, Edman concluded that the two-way communication present through the use of Twitter makes the relationships with publics better. Data from the study revealed much interaction with the “at reply” feature to communicate, which further suggests that current public relations tactics reflect usage of Twitter as part of a campaign to influence policy.

There is a growing trend of Twitter and Facebook use as a tactic by public relations practitioners in nonprofit work. Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas (2009) conducted a study on the usage of Facebook by nonprofit organizations to engage stakeholders through social networking. In this study, the researchers noted that it was not only important to utilize these sites as public relations measures, but to have practitioners complete careful planning and research in their usage to develop social networking relationships with organizational stakeholders. Research findings concluded that Facebook could be used as a tactic by nonprofit organizations to advance their mission and programs (Waters, Burnett, Lamm & Lucas, 2009).

Waters and Jamal (2011) expanded the study of nonprofit social media use for policy influence to not only study Facebook, but Twitter usage as well. Through their research, they were able to identify a strong usage of Twitter to communicate with organizational followers using one-way models. Although the potential for dialogue and community building through this social networking site exists, the researchers found that

nonprofit organizations from the Philanthropy 200 used Twitter for one-way communication as a public relations tactic (Waters & Jamal, 2011).

Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton's (2012) research agrees that nonprofit organizational use of Twitter is increasing and argues that practitioners are attempting to engage with followers and their stakeholders, but are failing due to their use of one-way communication. In this study, researchers acknowledged the difficulty in truly engaging stakeholders due to the 140-character limit provided by Twitter. After analyzing 4655 tweets, researchers found that current nonprofit tactics are not maximizing stakeholder involvement due to one-way communication as opposed to an open dialogue style of two-way communication. According to the study, Twitter is currently being used as a tactic to influence policy, but less than 20% of total tweets demonstrate conversational posts to engage followers in a dialogue (Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton, 2012).

Kent (2013) analyzed the use of social media by public relations practitioners in an effort to revive democracy by using social media dialogically. As opposed to Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton's (2012) research, Kent (2013) identified the pros and cons of this type of communication tool to discuss how current methods can be improved to strengthen the relationships between a client and their publics, as well as benefit democracy and society. Kent (2013) recognized that although people have anticipated more freedom and unfiltered sharing of information as technology has expanded, the reality of self-selected media has allowed people to select what they want and like to hear over what they need, creating a continued limited view. According to Kent (2013), "People spend more time with technology and access to information than ever before, but probably engage democracy less than at any point in history, since technology has made filtering out the

negative voices and opinions of others so easy (Kent, 2013, p. 338)”. With this reality, there is a strong opportunity for public relations professionals to engage followers dialogically and close the gap between self-selecting media tendencies and broader dialogical engagement, but that is currently not occurring. According to the article, current public relations practices and tactics have shifted professionals to be marketers, advertisers, and strategic communicators over their role as public relationship builders and counselors. Kent (2013) argues that:

Rather than social media being a cheap and easy way to reach stakeholders and publics with organizational messages, social media should be reenvisioned as interpersonal and group communication tools, and not a replacement for a weakened mass media. Using social media in public relations requires more than just the tool that dialogue provides; we also need an ideological shift.

Communication professionals need to change how they think about publics. (341)

Current public relations tactics to influence policy are centered on the benefit to the business, but Kent (2013) calls for practitioners to engage dialogically to promote democracy and engagement so that the exchange is two-way and mutually beneficial. According to Kent (2013), using social media communication for campaigns can create stronger, more meaningful communication through an exchange of information in a dialogical way, as opposed to the current limited one-way communication that practitioners are practicing.

Auger (2013) also studied social media use by public relations campaigns and noted the opportunity for fostering of democracy by nonprofit advocacy organizations through use of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Study findings indicate that the

nonprofit advocacy organizations researched use various social media channels for distinctly separate purposes. Similar to other studies completed in this research field, Auger (2013) found that one-way communication was being practiced to persuade followers to the nonprofit organization viewpoints. Twitter posts by the organizations focused on providing thanks and recognition. Authority figures in the campaigns were used to communicate messages distributed through YouTube, and Facebook was utilized for soliciting feedback and to engage in two-way communication with stakeholders.

Similar to the feedback of past research, Mississippians for Healthy Families used both new and old media in their campaign against Proposition 26. A key aspect of the organization's tactics in efforts to influence the vote was incorporating new media via their Twitter and Facebook communication. In accordance with increasing trends in public relations, Mississippians for Healthy Families No On 26 campaign exemplifies the powerful role social media plays in influencing policy change through public relations efforts. While studies exhibit a general trend in public relations tactics towards integration of social media as a key campaign tactic, they recognize the lack of effective two-way symmetrical communication. These studies identify the need for more dialogical two-way communication that the No On 26 campaign exhibits. Studies utilized in this literature review provide a holistic view of current public relations practices to influence policy change and identify the need for more principles exhibited by James E. Grunig's (1992) Excellence theory. The research presented supports the critical need for social media use in campaigns to maintain relevance in today's culture, but fails to identify campaigns where Excellence theory principles were carried out effectively. The research from this content analysis of Mississippians for Healthy Families No On 26 campaign

intends to fill this gap by identifying principles from this theory, and how their application can be beneficial to future campaigns by other organizations.

Case Study Method

Yin (2003) describes the case study as “the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.” Yin advises the use of case studies for research purposes within the social sciences (Yin, 2003, p. 1).

Yin (1981a) expanded the logic of case study design to not only include within its real-life context as mentioned earlier, but added, “especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. This statement explains that one would use a case study method if the researcher covered contextual conditions with the idea that they are highly pertinent to the phenomenon of study. A case study opens the study of more variables than experiments or surveys allowing more questions to be researched between the relationship of the phenomenon and its context (p. 13).

Yin (2003) identified three classifications case studies fall into: explanatory, exploratory and descriptive. Explanatory case studies are most important according to Yin, and “explain the presumed causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies”. Exploratory case studies are used to “explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes”. Lastly, descriptive case studies, “describe an intervention and the real-life context in which it occurred.” (p. 15). Descriptive studies can be used to generate

hypotheses about cause and effect relationships that are present. Through this thesis examination of an exemplary campaign program, a descriptive case study is used.

Schramm (1971) defines the central tendency of all types of case studies to “try to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result (p. 6)”. This thesis pattern follows Schramm’s definition as it assesses the campaign and its effect. Schramm also said that “a case study is deliberately and centrally designed to illuminate a decision, a policy, and a practice, and it will be useful to the extent that a reader can relate his own decision problems to those described in the case (p. 6).” This study attempts to make assumptions from the campaign patterns present that can be applied to other public relations campaigns. In that application, this thesis “illuminates” the Mississippians for Healthy Families campaign in order to allow readers to relate their future decisions to the findings as Schramm instructed.

The Excellence Theory in Public Relations

Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) identified public relations efforts as either programs or campaigns. Public relations programs provide communication efforts as an ongoing effort to develop relationships with the desired publics without a determined endpoint. Public relations campaigns include the same strategic efforts but are bound to a certain amount of time. PR campaigns are aimed at achieving a specific goal in a determined time frame and after completion the campaign is finished (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). Mississippians for Healthy Families *No On 26* is qualified as a public relations campaign because the election date served as the predetermined endpoint. This case study is an analysis of a campaign and its adherence to the normative principles of

excellent public relations.

J. Grunig (1992) developed the Excellence theory as a normative model for public relations practitioners to follow. The purpose of the study sought to answer, “How, why, and to what extent does communication affect the achievement of organizational objectives (p. 2)”? The model derived from the study outlines practices for effective public relations campaigns so that organizational goals are achieved. Grunig (1992) developed a series of general theory principles, which includes four levels: program, departmental, organizational and economic. The program level argues that to be most effective in meeting its objectives, public relations should be managed strategically (p. 12-15). At the departmental level, Grunig noted that to be most successful, public relations must function distinct from marketing, practicing two-way symmetric communications. Grunig argues for a separate department of public relations in which practitioners report to senior management (p. 15-27). The third level of the Excellence Theory calls for organizational conditions that reflect two-way communications, a participative culture with organic organizational structure. (p. 22-27). The final theme of this theory is the economic level in which communication delivers a tangible value of reduced costs of regulation and litigation as well as high job satisfaction among employees (p. 27).

The theory offers 10 normative principles discussed, in Part II of the book, for achieving excellent public relations in a campaign:

1. Involvement of public relations in strategic management.
2. Empowerment of public relations in the dominant coalition or a direct reporting relationship to senior management.

3. Integrated public relations function.
4. Public relations as a management function, separate from other functions.
5. Public relations unit headed by a manager rather than a technician.
6. Two-way symmetrical model of public relations in practice.
7. A symmetrical system of internal communication.
8. Knowledge needed to practice the managerial role and symmetrical public relations.
9. Diversity embodied in all roles.
10. Organizational context for excellence.

This thesis will focus on the principles that are relevant to the specific study in the review and application of the Excellence theory of public relations. In the study, the three principles examined will be: formative research; building and maintaining relationships with publics; and two-way symmetrical communication. Because the Excellence theory principles are vast to address public relations at the societal level, only three of the principles will be analyzed due to the case study's campaign focusing on a state level.

Formative research is identified by Grunig as a key stage in the development of a public relations campaign. He notes the process of scanning the environment in preliminary stages of campaign planning as a stage of formative research to identify and select the campaign's target audience segment. Grunig (2002) instructs public relations professionals to complete environmental scanning as an act of formative research prior to developing message design and output channels so that the outlet selection aligns with the target audience selected. Formative research involves preliminary research to identify

target audiences, key publics, and the various populations within the geographic range of which the campaign will reach and target.

Building and maintaining relationships with publics falls under the strategic management heading of public relations and is the key characteristic of excellent public relations at the micro-programmatic level. According to Grunig (1992) “strategically managed public relations is designed to build relationships with the most important stakeholders of an organization (p. 123)”. Organizations can perform more effectively by developing and maintaining relationships with these organizations and individuals to achieve their goals in a mutually beneficial way.

According to Grunig (1992), “Two-way symmetrical communication describes a model of public relations that is based on research and that uses communication to manage conflict and improve understanding with strategic publics (p. 18)”. His research also notes that this model of communication is more effective than the two-way asymmetrical model because it causes public relations professionals to engage dialogically with its publics to resolve questions or crisis as opposed to one-way persuasive communication (p. 19). Grunig notes, “Symmetrical communication takes place through dialogue, negotiation, listening, and conflict management rather than through persuasion, manipulation, and the giving of orders (Grunig, 1992, p. 231)”. He describes this practice as a two-way channel of communication in which the organization stays close to the customer and listens to their needs and requests, leading to a more mutually beneficial communicative interaction (Grunig, 1992, p. 19).

Research Question

The following research question is designed to understand communication methods used by Mississippians for Healthy Families in influencing public policy through the “No on 26” campaign. The question explores public relations methods for the organization as they were developed for use in the campaign. The aim of this research question is to understand specific tactics and practices of Mississippians for Healthy Families that can be applied to public relations campaigns as a whole. Although only one research question is posed, it is a broad inquiry of Excellence theory in the campaign and through a thorough content analysis, it seeks to identify if the three principles selected from the theory are exhibited. This research question provides the heading for sub-categorical analysis of each principle’s existence in the campaign materials.

RQ: How does the *No On 26* campaign exemplify the strategic management principles described in the Excellence theory?

CHAPTER III – METHOD

Through a descriptive single case study of Mississippians for Healthy Families' *No On 26* campaign, the researcher hopes to answer the research question. The method used will be a content analysis of social and print media produced for the *No On 26* campaign. This chapter contains an overview of qualitative case study method in addition to a specific explanation of how this particular case study will be conducted.

Case Studies Defined

The United States General Accounting Office (U.S. GAO, 1990) defined case study research as “A method for learning about a complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained by extensive description and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context (p. 17)”.

Yin (2003) describes the case study as “the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.” Yin advises the use of case studies for research purposes within the social sciences (p. 1).

Case Study Research Design

Yin (2003) laid out the technical characteristics with strategies for data collection and analysis:

The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a

triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection analysis (p. 13-14).

To increase validity and reliability of research, Yin advised the use of triangulation. By using multiple methods and sources of data, he argues that the result of the study will be more supported upon finding the same results in each data source. While Yin presents a valid argument, due to the nature of the campaign, only a single method will be completed. Mississippians for Healthy Families was formed for the sole purpose of defeating a specific proposition in a single election. Upon termination of the election, the organization website was shut down and the group disbanded. For this reason, online materials serve as the primary sources for study of this campaign (p. 13-14).

Documents are included in Yin's list of commonly used sources for case studies. Strengths and weaknesses exist with this form of evidence as described by Yin (2003). Yin (2003) credits this documentary information as the "most likely to be relevant to every case study topic (p. 85)". Although Yin's work was completed before the recent growth of social media and technology, two of the points within the variety of documents apply to this study. These points are: "evaluations of the same 'site' under study" and "Newspaper clippings and other articles appearing in the mass media or in community newsletters (p. 86)". The current study views Twitter, Facebook and the Mississippians for Healthy Families and PPFA websites to gather documentary information. According to Yin, the strengths of documentation exist as follows: "stable—can be reviewed repeatedly; unobtrusive—not created as a result of the case study; exact—contains exact names, references, and details of an event; broad coverage—long span of time, many events, and many settings" (p. 86).

Yin also addressed possible potential weaknesses in using documentation as a source of evidence: “retrievability—can be low; biased selectivity, if collection is incomplete; reporting bias—reflects (unknown) bias of author; access—may be deliberately blocked” (p. 86).

Procedures and Data Analysis

Content Analysis

A content analysis of Mississippians for Healthy Families’ *No On 26* published media via Twitter, Facebook, votenoon26.org and ppfa.org served as the primary methods for collecting data. Media distributed between August and November of 2011 was pulled from MS4HealthyFamilies on Twitter, Mississippians For Healthy Families on Facebook, votenoon26.org, and plannedparenthood.org. Documents were printed and separated by media source. Posts and comments from the social media sites were the primary focus, and press releases from the partner organization PPFA served as additional media for the content analysis.

Data analysis of the documentary information began after collection and separation of materials occurred, then documents were carefully and systematically reviewed.

Texts were read and noted for presence of emerging theory of Excellence principles. Once analyses of the documents were completed, the themes present in the sources were used to answer the posed research question in relation to the campaign. Themes present in the material were used to assess if the No On 26 campaign exhibited public relations practices of formative research; building and maintaining relationships with publics; and two-way symmetrical communication.

Data Analysis

After collecting materials via MS4HealthyFamilies on Twitter, Mississippians For Healthy Families on Facebook, votenoon26.org, and plannedparenthood.org, documents were organized into groupings based on their source. Next, data analysis began on the documents by reading them individually and coding textual content for emerging themes. Themes were noted which pertained to principles laid out by the Grunig 1992 Theory of Excellence for successful public relations communication. Upon careful analysis of the documents, notes were taken on these themes. Specific colors were assigned to each of the three Excellence theory principles in study and upon their occurrence in the document, a notation was made with the designated color.

CHAPTER IV- RESULTS

RQ2:How does the *No On 26* campaign exemplify the strategic management principles described in the Excellence theory?

Themes collected from the content analysis indicate many strategic management principles from Grunig's excellent public relations model are exemplified in the *No On 26* campaign. This public relations campaign enacted by Mississippians for Healthy Families exemplifies three principles that are key in the Excellence theory. Through the use of the two-way symmetrical model of communication when interacting with external publics, developing and maintaining relationships with key publics, and using formative research to develop campaign graphics and content, this campaign exhibits these principles.

Formative Research

While it is hard to identify exactly what type of formative research and evaluation occurred without speaking with the campaign creators, it is clear through the message content and organization logo that formative research did occur to create a strategic campaign plan of attack. The *No On 26* campaign messages and logo design are representative of the extensive formative research conducted as part of the campaign.

The organization name alone depicts a strong formative research force in the campaign. According to the Internal Revenue Service Form 990: Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, the organization was filed for in Atlanta, GA by residents across the south eastern United States and not by families in Mississippi as the organizational name suggests to the public. Although anticipated followers and supporters of the campaign were Mississippi families, individuals in this segment did not

file for the organization. Through a content analysis of campaign media, it is clear that formative research was completed to develop a base for effective campaign strategy.

By identifying families in the state of Mississippi as the key target for the campaign, campaign staff was able to tailor the campaign name, slogan, logo, media outlets used and messages. The name “Mississippians for Healthy Families” reflects an idea that parents in the state formed this group to protect the health of their families and the logo depicting a silhouette of the state and family follows this theme. In figure 1 of the appendix, the red, white and blue campaign logo can be viewed. The logo design displays the organization name, “Mississippians For Healthy Families,” accompanied by the link to the campaign website and a red image of a family standing hand in hand on top of the silhouette of Mississippi. Creation of the organization name and logo provides evidence that formative research took place to identify this group as the key public for the campaign. Through the content analysis, use of formative research became evident in all campaign graphics through a consistent use of the logo. While Mississippians for Healthy Families was not formed by actual families in the state of Mississippi, use of research was strategic in the creation of the campaign to target and build support in this community because they were perceived to be likely supporters and capable of acting on behalf of the organization by voting No on 26.

Once formative research was complete and the campaign was given a name and logo, messages and tactics were strategized to reach and engage families in favor of No On 26. Campaign messages and social media account images support the claim that formative research was used in the early stages of campaign planning which created a distinct target to which all tactics would be aimed. The organization name and logo

developed through formative research remained consistent among all communication platforms to create a unified image that supporters could connect with.

Figure 2 in the appendix displays the home page for MS4HealthyFamilies on Twitter, Figure 3 shows the home page for the campaign Facebook page, and Figure 4 displays the heading of the votenoon26.org campaign website. Aside from layout differences native to the varying social media sites, the organizational design elements on each are identical. All three pages focus on a consistent red, white and blue color scheme and large display of the campaign logo. In figures 2, 3 and 4 one can view the red silhouette of a family, which is part of the logo, as the focus point for each site. The presence of this graphic consistently and prominently further supports the claim that families were identified as the key target public for the campaign, and formative research was used by campaign staff in planning stages to come to this decision.

Strategic Management and Building Relationships With Publics

According to Grunig, “Public relations makes organizations more effective by developing relations with stakeholders in the internal or external environment that constrain or enhance the ability of an organization to accomplish its mission (118)”. With this being said, it is important when assessing Excellence theory principles in this campaign to identify the target publics with which the campaign creators established relations. Building relationships with stakeholders fits into the strategic management of public relations and is the key characteristic of excellent public relations at the micro-programmatic level of the Excellence theory.

Strategic management of relationships with partners was used in the campaign as *No On 26* became aligned with the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the

University of Southern Mississippi (USM) student group VOX: Voices for Planned Parenthood, and Parents Against MS 26. The outreach director for Mississippians for Healthy Families, Felicia Brown Williams, also works as Southeast Regional Director of Public Policy for PPFA. By developing a partnership between these two organizations, the *No On 26* campaign was able to create a more successful campaign through shared resources. In reviewing articles from the Planned Parenthood Federation of America's website and Twitter page @PPact, several press releases and tweets reflected PPFA support of the movement through Mississippians for Healthy Families. Through statements of affiliation and sharing of the campaign hash tag #NoOn26, media content collected for this study exhibits the strategic building and management of a relationship with PPFA as a key public for the campaign.

Figure 5 in the appendix displays a press release distributed on PlannedParenthood.org, which congratulates Mississippians for Healthy Families on their successful campaign and identifies PPFA as a partner. In the press release, Juan Carr, Director of Community Affairs for PPFA, writes, "PPGMR is proud to have been a part of the Mississippians for Healthy Families Coalition, which ran a campaign to educate voters about the dangerous impacts the amendment would have on women's health (Carr, 2011)". This press release is one of the examples found in the content analysis in which a public statement by Planned Parenthood in support of Mississippians for Healthy families was published, and it exemplifies use of strategic management and building relationships with publics by campaign staff. It is evident in the language of the PPFA press release in figure 5 that Grunig's (1992) Excellence theory principle to build relationships with key publics was used as a tactic for this campaign.

Figure 6 shows another example of use of this principle in the campaign through display of Tweets by both the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, @PPact, and Mississippians for Healthy Families, @MS4HealthyFams. In figure 6, one can view evidence that PPFA used the Mississippians for Healthy Families campaign hash tag “#NoOn26” in a post on their Twitter account. This post is one of many collected in the content analysis and displays additional evidence in support of the claim that Mississippians for Healthy Families established and managed a close relationship with PPFA as practice of Grunig’s (1992) Excellence theory principle to build relationships with key publics.

A partnership was also created with the student organization VOX: Voices for Planned Parenthood. According to Event Services at the University of Southern Mississippi, VOX held voter registration and informational table sittings in Shoemaker Square on September 20, October 18, October 25, and November 15, 2011. Former club member Christen Richardson verified this partnership during the campaign period in Fall of 2011. Many posts collected from Mississippians For Healthy Families on Facebook reflect this partnership as reviewed in the content analysis. In an album titled “USM – Vote NO on 26!”, the campaign Facebook page displays this partnership through photos of members of the VOX club campaigning on the university campus. Figure 7 illustrates this Facebook photo album of four photos taken while students in VOX participated in an organized informational event on the University of Southern Mississippi campus. The photos in figure 7 display college-aged students holding clip boards, promotional materials and voter registration paperwork. These images were reviewed in the content analysis and provide evidence supporting the partnership between VOX and

Mississippians for Healthy Families. Through their partnership with this student organization, Mississippians For Healthy Families was able to reach the student population with campaign efforts. Another Facebook post analyzed in the content analysis process reflected the benefits of building and maintaining this relationship through a day of campaigning to the university homecoming crowd. Figure 8 displays the post content, which reflects gratitude to the “awesome volunteers and staff in Hattiesburg!” The Facebook status post in figure 8 reads: “Big thanks to our awesome volunteers and staff in Hattiesburg! We worked the homecoming crowd and spoke to over 1,000 people, identified HUNDREDS of people voting NO and even recruited 60 volunteers! GREAT WORK!” This post as well as many others via the Mississippians for Healthy Families Facebook page reflects the close partnership between these organizations and are exemplary of the strategic management of target audience relationships throughout the campaign. It is clear through review of Facebook status posts viewed in the content analysis that this relationship was strategically managed and built to benefit Mississippians for Healthy Families as well as the student members of VOX who shared the passion for urging voters to vote against MS Proposition 26. Development and careful management of this relationship is precisely what Grunig (1992) called for in the Excellence theory.

With the combination of the only PPFA center for the State of Mississippi being located in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, (ppfa.org) and one of the largest universities in the state being located there as well, the strategic building of relationships with these two already established organizations was beneficial to strengthening the support base for the Mississippians for Healthy Families No On 26 campaign. By identifying a geographic

area of the state with pre-established strong support organizations for the cause, Mississippians for Healthy Families was able to partner and establish ties with a preexisting support base. Relationships with PPFA and VOX in the city of Hattiesburg expanded the sphere of influence the organization had and aligns with the Excellence theory.

The third key public relationship built as part of the strategic relationship management of the campaign was with “Parents Against MS 26.” Similar to Facebook and Twitter posts exhibiting the other key public partnerships, examination of campaign materials presents content regarding a relationship with Parents Against MS 26 for the benefit of the Mississippians for Healthy Families campaign. Parents Against MS 26 was an independent organization funded by individual contributors. A relationship was built as part of the No On 26 campaign to gain supporters from this already established base of supporters (Parents Against MS 26).

Through the creation of Facebook photo albums and status updates on the Mississippians for Healthy Families page displaying photos of partnering organizations, they were able to promote these strategically built and maintained relationships to build credibility with campaign audiences. This tactic was evident in materials reviewed in the content analysis. Figure 9 displays a Facebook photo album posted on the Mississippians for Healthy Families page titled, “Parents Oppose Initiative 26.” Images in the album show several mothers holding their young children in one hand, and signs reading “PARENTS AGAINST MS 26” and “trust families, not politicians” in the other hand. This album promotes the organizational relationship between Mississippians for Healthy Families and Parents Against MS 26 via social media. Comments on the album are also

visible in Figure 9, and reflect an open dialogue of how campaign supporters can obtain yard signs for both organizations. Facebook user Cassandra Russell commented on the album, “I really would like 1 if this signs! I live in oxford, how do i get 1” to which the Mississippians for Healthy Families account replied, “For the Parents sign I suggest you visit their website... For the No On 26 signs you can download them from the website... thank you!” These comments reflect a mutually supportive and beneficial relationship between the two organizations and shows that the relationship was strategically built for mutual benefit from supporters who have interest in the cause of both organizations. Evidence of this final key public relationship through Facebook posts validates the belief that Mississippians for Healthy Families developed and fostered a relationship with this key stakeholder in addition to PPFA and VOX as a tactic to improve their campaign, which follows Grunig’s (1992) Excellence theory principle.

Two-Way Symmetrical Communication

The final principle examined in the No On 26 campaign was the use of two-way symmetrical communication by Mississippians for Healthy Families. This practice created an honest and open two-way communication channel, promoting a mutual give-and-take as opposed to a one-way persuasive tactic. Through the Mississippians for Healthy Families Facebook and Twitter pages, campaign communicators were able to engage in the two-way exchange that Grunig calls for in the Excellence theory of Public Relations.

Upon analyzing the content of the MS4HealthyFamilies Twitter account @MS4HealthyFams, it is evident that through replying and retweeting follower content, the No On 26 campaign was able to utilize two-way communication with its publics. By

engaging with followers in this way, No On 26 was able to capitalize on the benefits of this Excellence theory principle. Exemplary Tweets from the @MS4HealthyFams twitter feed can be found in figures 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the appendix.

Figure 10 displays a conversation between @MS4HealthyFams and Twitter user @0ut0fMyHead in which a follower directly contacted the organizational page and a two-way dialogue resulted. The post reads: @0ut0fMyHead “@MS4HealthyFams Where can I get a #NoOn26 sign for my yard? My neighborhood’s pastel propaganda needs to be countered. #personhoodforwomen” to which @MS4HealthyFams replies, “@0ut0fMyHead visit votenoon26.org to register under Get Involved or email contactus@voteno0n26.org! Thanks!” The second post present in figure 10 is from @kirel_gaisuto and reads: “@MS4HealthyFams Just voted! We’re still behind but we’re a lot closer than I would’ve guessed! Gives me hope :D” to which @MS4HealthyFams replies, “@kirel_gaisuto thank you!” Dialogical engagement of this two-way communication style is representative of Grunig’s (1992) Excellence theory principle, which calls for two-way symmetrical communication. These posts are exemplary of many posts reviewed in the content analysis, which present two-way communication of this type. Dialogical exchange between campaign followers and the campaign accounts were able to engage followers in a conversation just as the Excellence theory principle calls for.

Another style of two-way symmetrical communication viewed in content analysis materials is exhibited in figure 11. In this figure, one can view both reply and retweet practices used by the Mississippians for Healthy Families Twitter page. In the first post, Twitter user @NoOnMS26 tweeted: “Want yard signs? You can contact

@MS4HealthyFams here: contactus@votenoont26.org. Be sure to put “Yard Signs” in the subject line,” to which @MS4HealthyFams replied, “@NoOnMS26 thanks for the tweet!” This tweet conversation exhibits the two-way symmetrical communication style by responding in a timely manner to a direct communication tweet to the campaign account. Unlike many posts, which exhibit this dialogical communication practice, this one is unique in that the follower was not requesting anything of the organization. Most tweets to the organization found in the content analysis requested information or action from @MS4HealthyFams, but this post provided the organization with promotion from a supporter free of demands or request for action. It is important to note that, because of the nature of this interaction, the @MS4HealthyFams account retweeted the post in addition to posting a public thank you to the follower. Through the use of reply tweets and retweets, Mississippians for Healthy Families was able to engage in two-way symmetrical communication while also developing a relationship with this follower and credibility with an even larger number of followers who viewed the tweet and retweet after. Grunig (1992) called for a mutual give-and-take in campaign communication as opposed to one-way persuasive communication from the organization and these tweets exhibit practice of this principle.

Figure 12 presents another example of @MS4HealthyFams retweeting follower content. This interaction is slightly different than the content found in figure 11 because the Mississippians for Healthy Families account retweeted material from a post by Twitter account MS NAACP that did not tag their organization, but instead, presented a general call to “RT” or retweet. The original post by @MSNAACP read, “On Tuesday, November 8 VOTE NO on Initiative 26! Protect the health and safety of Mississippi

women and families. Please RT.” Mississippians for Healthy Families was able to engage with MS NAACP different from most other two-way symmetrical communication practices in the campaign. Although the accounts did not specifically identify their communication directly with one another, this communication creates two-way interaction through Twitter notifications.

Figure 13 shows the final type of two-way communication practiced by Mississippians for Healthy Families on their twitter page, which is a retweet of an individual follower retweet. Twitter user @mackcole tweeted, “@annahreycash_ RT @MS4HealthyFams: Download Flyers and Yard Signs – spread the word to Vote #NoOn26 votenoon26.org/documents.” The original tweet was posted by Mississippians for Healthy families, and follower @annahreycash_ retweeted the post regarding downloading of yard signs, then her follower @mackcole retweeted the post again, before @MS4HealthyFams brought the post full circle and retweeted both followers simultaneously. This two-way symmetrical communication engaged all three accounts as well as generated attention by followers of all of those accounts. The post identifies use of retweeting by the Mississippians for Healthy Families campaign in order to open the conversation for interaction with followers.

Two-way symmetrical communication was also utilized by the No On 26 campaign via their Facebook page, Mississippians for Healthy Families. Usage of this Excellence theory principle varied in usage on Facebook. Through comments posted from the Mississippians for Healthy Families account on page posts, campaign staff was able to open a two-way channel of dialogue with supporters. Figure 14 exhibits the use of comments for this purpose. Mississippians for Healthy Families posted a Facebook status

update stating, “Jill is Voting NO on 26! Keep posting pictures of your pledge to Vote NO on 26 tomorrow – Thank you!” accompanied by a follower shared photo of two mothers holding infants with the caption, “Because I love my daughters and my grandchildren... I’m voting NO on 26.” In the comments section below the image followers dialoged through comments in support of “Jill” in the post. Mississippians for Healthy Families also engaged in the conversation by commenting, “Three cheers for Jill Power – thank you, Jills!!” This campaign post in figure 14 exhibits both two-way symmetrical communication tactics used by Mississippians for Healthy Families. The first of these tactics is the use of interactive commenting by the campaign page on posts. The personal and individual comment reached out to Jill, her circle of followers, and showed other followers that the campaign account was active and engaging. By generating a personalized post relevant to the follower created discussion, Mississippians for Healthy Families capitalized on the dialogue and practiced Grunig’s (1992) Excellence principle that calls for two-way symmetrical communication as opposed to one-way promotional communication. This post engaged followers and obtained five “likes” by followers, which supports the argument that this type of post is more likely to engage followers and benefit the campaign.

Figure 15 displays a more dialogue heavy example of two-way symmetrical communication via the Mississippians for Healthy Families Facebook page. In the process of a follow started comment conversation on the organizational page, a follower by the profile name Terri Lynn Lee requested, “non biased info on what this law will do if it is passed, not for me but for a Friend,,, I will be voting no, but I need your help so this person can decide for herself which way to vote.” Mississippians for Healthy

Families engaged in a timely manner with a personal answer to her request and referral to further resource materials. The response reads, “Terri – check out our website for direct links to statements from organizations like Mississippi Nurses Association and American Association for Reproductive Medicine on why they oppose Initiative 26.

<http://www.voteno26.org/opposition> We also have articles and editorials from newspapers across the state – <http://www.voteno26.org/news> Also, Parents Against MS 26 has a lot of material – <http://parentsagainstms26.com/>.” This figure illustrates ideal two-way symmetrical communication just as the Excellence theory calls for.

Mississippians for Healthy Families engaged with a follower on an individual basis and responded with a complete response that provided multiple means to answer their question. Instead of promoting their specific organization, the organization was willing to engage dialogically in a discussion to further the mutual cause through conversation as opposed to one-way promotional material, which only benefits the organization most times. Follower Terri Lynn Lee replied to the campaign post by exclaiming thank you, and the comment received three “likes.” Practice of this Excellence theory principle reaped immediate benefits for the organization and the individual.

The second way that two-way symmetrical communication was used on the campaign Facebook page utilized interactive status updates requesting campaign supporter photos. Similar to the strategy of figure 14, figures 16, 17 and 18 display this tactic in practice. Status posts encouraged followers to post photos of themselves to the page via messages or wall posts. Mississippians for Healthy Families encouraged followers to include a sign with the campaign slogan “No On 26” in the photo. Photos were collected and shared individually as well as collectively in a photo album titled,

“I’m voting No On 26.” Use of this tactic encouraged communication back and forth between the organization and supporters. The album description noted that, “These Mississippians are voting NO on 26! Are you? Send us your pledge to vote no at contactus@voteno26.org or post one to our Facebook Page!” and can be seen in figure 16. This album composed of 71 photos displays a diverse range of people from all ages and races. This practice can be considered two-way symmetrical communication because it invites followers to engage dialogically as they share their photos with the page, then further dialogue takes place as followers and organizational communication exchange comments on each individual image. Opening this two-way symmetrical dialogue stream encouraged practice of this Excellence theory principle. Figures 16 and 17 serve as examples of this practice and were analyzed as part of the content analysis.

Figure 17 displays two Facebook status update posts by Mississippians for Healthy Families in which photos from the “I’m Voting NO on 26” photo album from Figure 16 are posted as individual entities. The first status to the left of the figure displays an image of a young couple with the status text, “Who is Voting NO on 26? Daniel and Jill are! Post a picture of your pledge to Vote NO on 26 to our Facebook Page – Vote NO on 26 on Tuesday!” The second status to the right of the figure repeats similar text, but displays an image of a mother and her daughter with the caption, “I am voting NO on 26 because... OUR reproductive decisions are NOT A PUBLIC CONCERN!!!” Each post received over 50 “likes” and several comments. These posts in figure 17 exhibit the use of two-way symmetrical communication by Mississippians for Healthy Families on their Facebook page. Although the photo album of images was successful in gathering and engaging two-way dialogical interaction, this additional practice continues the channel of

open communication. Followers were able to receive confirmation that their images were received as they were posted by the Mississippians for Healthy Families page, and similar to the two-way symmetrical dialogue that began on images in the photo album, conversations began between the organizations and its publics through this practice as well.

Through careful review of posts by Mississippians for Healthy Families on Facebook, Twitter and votenoon26.org through a content analysis, formative research, strategic management of building relationships with publics, and two-way symmetrical communication were found to be present in campaign practices.

CHAPTER V- DISCUSSION

A content analysis was completed as a qualitative method in this case study to analyze and identify the use of Excellence theory principles of public relations in the No On 26 campaign for Mississippians for Healthy Families. Excellence theory principles found to be present in campaign materials include the use of formative research, strategic management and relationship building with key publics, and two-way symmetrical communication. These principles were utilized to form a framework for analysis of documents to answer the research question. The results indicate that these themes were found in materials collected from the Facebook, Twitter and website for Mississippians for Healthy Families. The results of this study demonstrate that use of these principles is crucial to a successful campaign and achievement of campaign goals. Results of the No On 26 case study reflect J. Grunig's (1992) principles for excellent public relations programs and support public relations literature, which emphasizes the importance of this theory.

Through application of Excellence principles, the No On 26 campaign by Mississippians for Healthy Families provides evidence, which indicates effective public relations campaigns can result from strategic implementation of J. Grunig's (1992) theory.

CHAPTER VI – CONCLUSION

This study contributes to public relations theory by providing analysis of the way Excellence theory public relations principles can be applied to a state wide political campaign. The research presents evidence that public relations programs can benefit greatly from incorporating Excellence theory principles from J. Grunig (1992). Through incorporation of formative research, relationship building with key publics, and two-way symmetrical communication, public relations campaigns to influence public policy can be more effective as found in this case study of Mississippians for Healthy Families No On 26 campaign.

Limitations of the Study

The most significant limitation to the research is the lack of interviews and testimonials from campaign staff. Due to confidentiality of internal documents, collection of data of this nature was denied upon request. If information regarding internal strategy of the Mississippians for Healthy Families No On 26 campaign were to be reviewed it could enhance the study. Without collection of interviews and testimonials from campaign staff the study is limited solely to content analysis of public campaign documents.

Future Research

Future research should examine additional Excellence theory principles to identify their possible presence and use in the campaign. In order to fully support J. Grunig's (1992) theory, additional principles should be analyzed in campaign documents for future research. A cross comparison of opposition organizations in support of MS Initiative 26 would also be beneficial to future research. An analysis of campaign

documents from organizations with the opposite motive on the initiative could further support use of the Excellence theory if research concluded that the principles were absent from competitor campaigns.

Implications of the Study

The purpose of the study was to better understand communication methods used by Mississippians for Healthy Families in influencing public policy through the “No on 26” campaign. The aim of the study was to understand specific tactics and practices of the organization that can be applied to public relations campaigning as a whole. The research question was examined through a content analysis of external campaign materials. Study findings assist public relations scholars and practitioners to better understand how political activist campaign managers can incorporate Excellence theory principles into campaign strategy to reach campaign goals. Through implementation of Excellence theory principles, specifically the use of formative research, relationship building with key publics, and two-way symmetrical communication, public relations practitioners can experience more successful campaigns. Additionally, other principles from Grunig’s (1992) theory can be applied in conjunction to the three principles highlighted in this study to further enhance campaign efforts.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1: Mississippians For Healthy Families Campaign Logo



Mississippians for Healthy Families. (2011). (No On 26 Campaign Logo). Retrieved from <https://www.voteno26.org>

Figure 2: Mississippians For Healthy Families Twitter Page



MS4HealthyFamilies. (2011). (@MS4HealthyFams Twitter Page). Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/MS4HealthyFams>

Figure 3: Mississippians For Healthy Families Facebook Page



Mississippians For Healthy Families. (2011). (Mississippians For Healthy Families Facebook Page). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/MS4HealthyFamilies>

Figure 4: Mississippians For Healthy Families Website



Mississippians for Healthy Families. (2011). (No On 26 Campaign Website Heading). Retrieved from <https://www.votenoont26.org>

Figures 1-4 retrieved from the @MS4HealthyFams campaign Twitter account, the Mississippians for Healthy Families Facebook page, and the campaign website votenoont26.org. These figures are representative of the use of formative research evident in the campaign.

Figure 5: Planned Parenthood Federation of America Press Release

Planned Parenthood Statement about the Defeat of the "Personhood" Ballot Initiative in Mississippi

Source: Planned Parenthood Greater Memphis Region

Contacts

Joan Carr
Director of Community Affairs
(901) 725-3008

Published: 11.09.11 | Updated: 11.09.11

MEMPHIS, TN — Planned Parenthood Greater Memphis Region (PPGMR) praises the voters and grassroots activists in Mississippi who

PPGMR is proud to have been a part of the Mississippians for Healthy Families Coalition, which ran a campaign to educate voters about the dangerous impacts the amendment would have on women's health. Polling showed that in the final days leading up to the vote, support for initiative 26 dropped to below 50 percent.

Carr, J. (2011, November 9). PlannedParenthood.org. *Planned Parenthood Statement about the Defeat of the "Personhood" Ballot Initiative in Mississippi*. Retrieved February 12, 2014, from <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/newsroom/local-press-releases/planned-parenthood-statement-about-defeat-personhood-ballot-initiative-Mississippi-38261.htm?utma=1.959565603.1381784293.13873087>

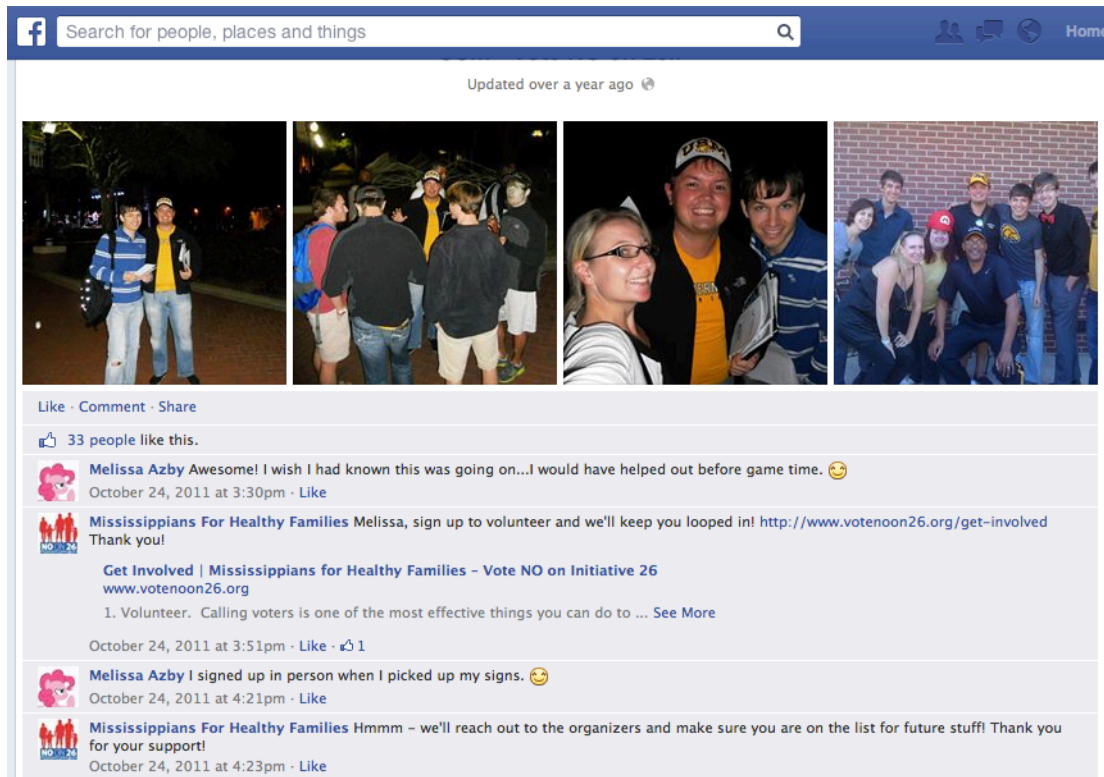
Figure 6: Planned Parenthood Federation of America & Mississippians For Healthy Families Tweets



Planned Parenthood (PPact) 8 Nov. 2011, 9:38 p.m. Tweet. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/PPact>

MS4HealthyFamilies (MS4HealthyFams) 8 Nov. 2011, 9:38 p.m. Tweet. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/MS4HealthyFams>

Figure 7: Mississippians For Healthy Families Facebook Photo Album



Mississippians for Healthy Families. "USM – Vote NO on 26!!" (2011, Oct.). (Facebook Album). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.265884983446889.56873.239937066041681&type=3>

Figure 8: Mississippians For Healthy Families Facebook Status Posts



Mississippians for Healthy Families. (2011, Oct. 24). (Facebook Status Posts). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/MS4HealthyFamilies>

Figure 9: Mississippians For Healthy Families Facebook Photo Album



Mississippians for Healthy Families. "Parents Oppose Initiative 26." (2011, October). (Facebook Photo Album). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.267435323291855.57210.239937066041681&type=3>

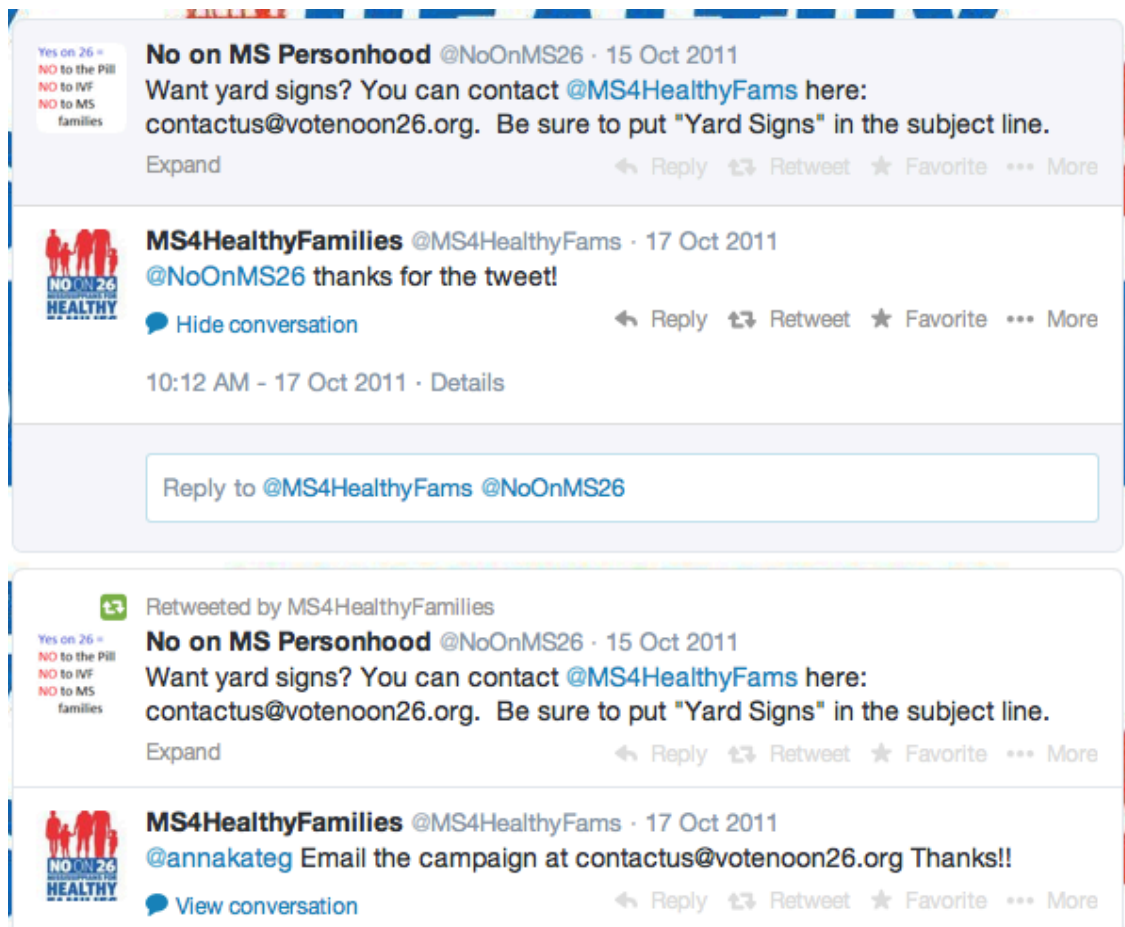
Figures 5-9 are representative of the use of Strategic Management and Building Relationships with Publics in the campaign.

Figure 10: Mississippians For Healthy Families Tweets



MS4HealthyFamilies (MS4HealthyFams) 17 Oct. 2011, 10:09 a.m. Tweet. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/MS4HealthyFams>

Figure 11: Mississippians For Healthy Families Tweets



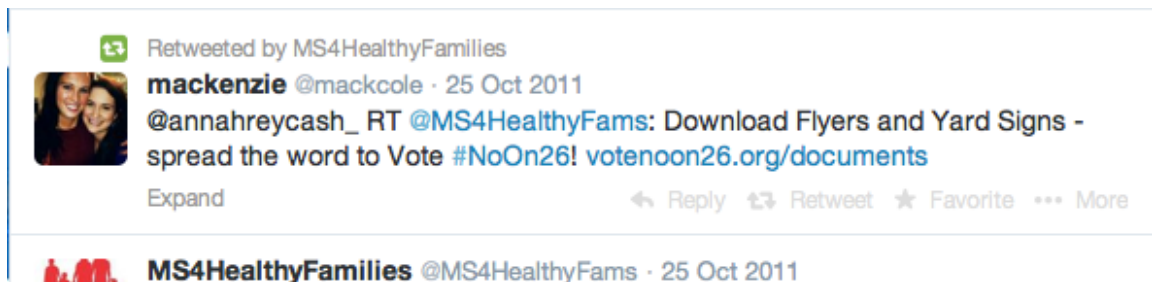
MS4HealthyFamilies (MS4HealthyFams) 17 Oct. 2011, 10:012 a.m. Tweet. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/MS4HealthyFams>

Figure 12: Mississippians For Healthy Families Tweets



MS4HealthyFamilies (MS4HealthyFams) 24 Oct. 2011, Tweet. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/MS4HealthyFams>

Figure 13: Mississippians For Healthy Families Tweets



MS4HealthyFamilies (MS4HealthyFams) 25 Oct. 2011, Tweet. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/MS4HealthyFams>

Figure 14: Mississippians For Healthy Families Facebook Status Post



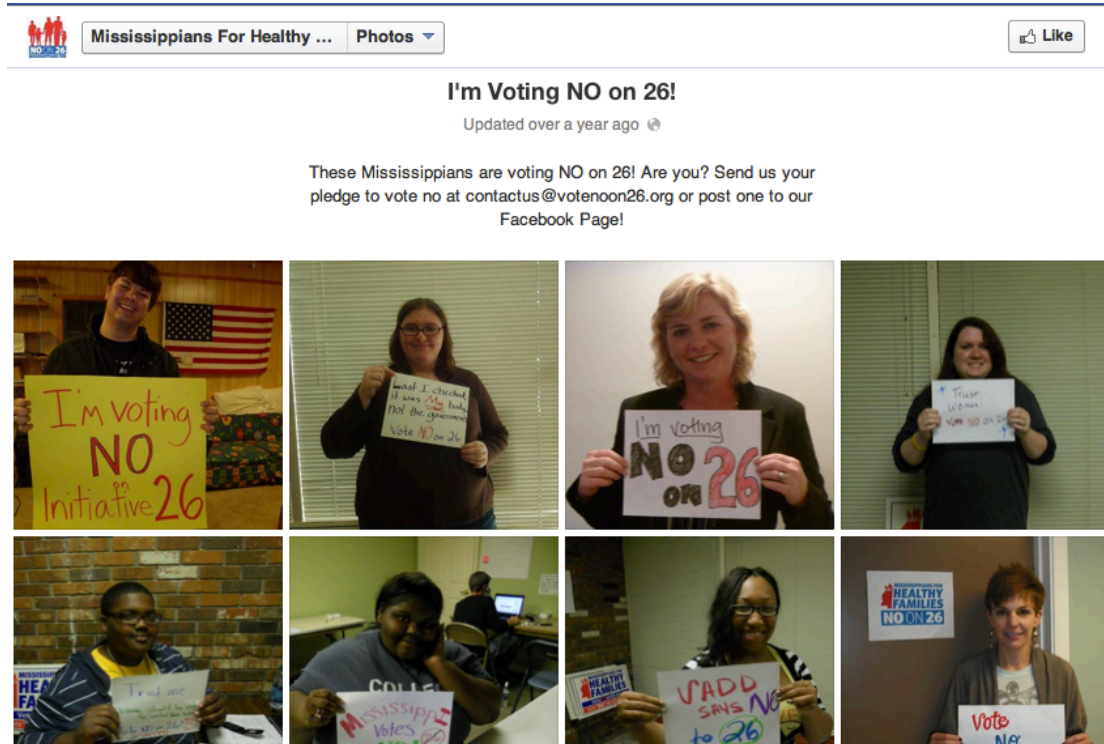
Mississippians for Healthy Families. (2011, Oct). (Facebook Photo Status Post). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/MS4HealthyFamilies>

Figure 15: Mississippians For Healthy Families Facebook Comments



Mississippians for Healthy Families. (2011, Nov). (Facebook Comments). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/MS4HealthyFamilies>

Figure 16: Mississippians For Healthy Families Facebook Photo Album



Mississippians for Healthy Families. "I'm Voting NO on 26." (2011, Oct). (Facebook Photo Album). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/MS4HealthyFamilies>

Figure 17: Mississippians For Healthy Families Facebook Status Posts



Mississippians for Healthy Families. (2011, Nov. 7). (Facebook Status Posts). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/MS4HealthyFamilies>

Figures 10-17 are representative of the use of Two-Way Symmetrical Communication in the campaign.